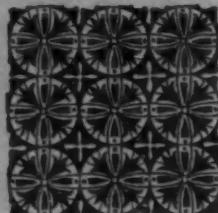


# Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



FROM A TOMB AT THEBES

MARCH, 1955

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Lewis Mumford

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Henry S. Churchill, F.A.I.A.

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To Goldy from Hubertus Junius

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Clair W. Ditchy, F.A.I.A.

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Ralph Walker, F.A.I.A.

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George H. Herrick

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Frank Memoli

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT THE OCTAGON, WASHINGTON, D. C.

# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

WITH THE AIM OF AMPLIFYING  
AS THROUGH A MICROPHONE  
THE VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

MARCH, 1955

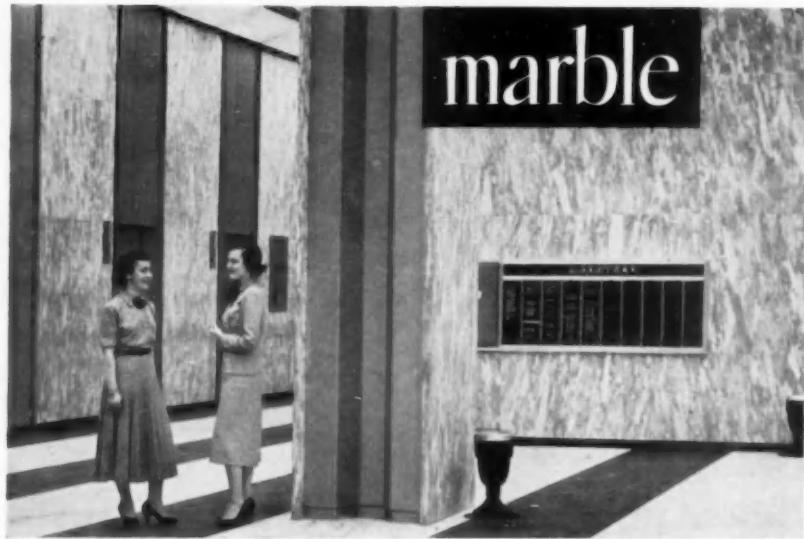
VOL. XXIII, No. 3



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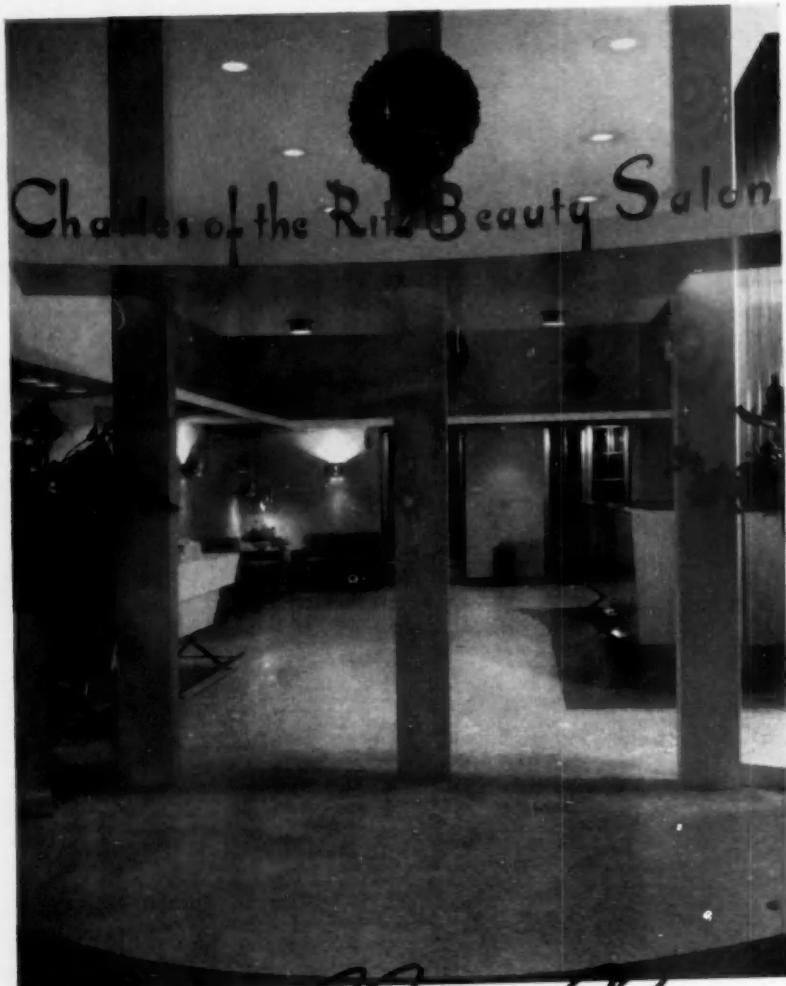
\*As discussed in Architectural Forum, June, 1953, page 151 by William Zeckendorf, President, Webb & Knapp, Realtors.

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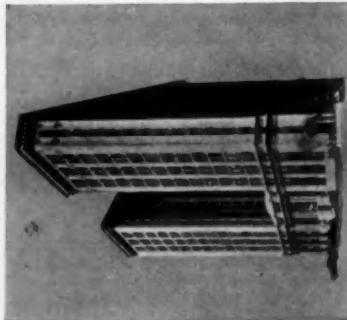
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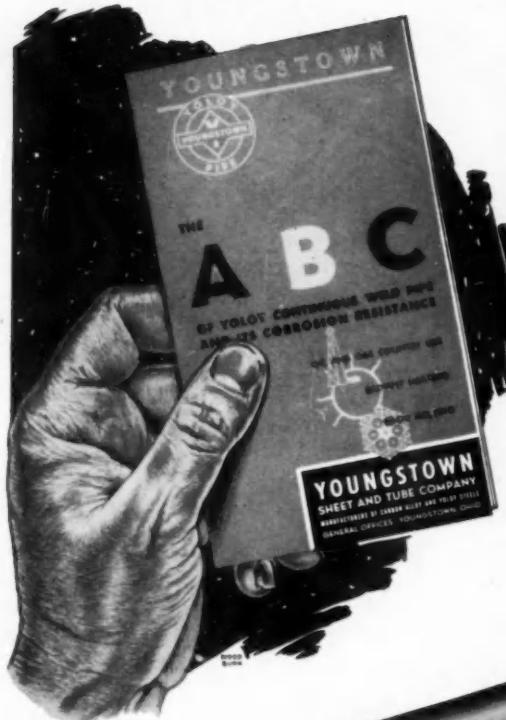
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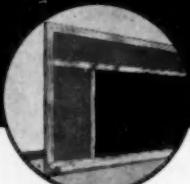
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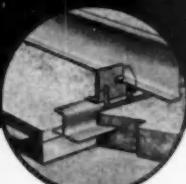
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## Arts and the Man

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

*By Lewis Mumford*

An address to the Columbia University Conference on "The Role of the University in the Creative Arts," November 13, 1954.

THE FACT that my theme tonight, Arts and the Man, carries with it an allusive echo of Virgil's *Arms and the Man*, and of Carlyle's emendation, *Tools and the Man*, is of course not an accident. I want at the outset to express two of the growing convictions of our age: the belief that man himself, with all his still unexplored potentialities and creativities, must be restored to the center of our world picture, and the further belief that it is in the repressed and rejected elements of our culture, in religion and in art, that we shall find the power to redress the balance, and redeem Western man from the state so well described by A. E. Housman: "A stranger and afraid in a world I never made." During the last half century modern man has been reduced more and more to a passive instrument of the organizations and instruments his own intelligence has created: a diminished figure

lost in a faceless crowd, pushed and halted, as the lights change from green to red and back again, by forces outside him, admonished by loud-speakers he has no power to turn off or answer back, paralyzed into anxious silence by the threats of nuclear explosions that might bring all human life to an end. We know that this state cannot continue indefinitely without destroying civilization or without bringing about a bold reaction that will restore human confidence and start a fresh cycle of creative activity.

Our concern with the arts today is a concern for man's central interests and activities: we purpose to foster the arts and to bring them into a more responsible and effective working relation with the community, because we need some concrete manifestations in our life, day by day, to recall us to our essential humanity: we seek the arts, in fact, because we need once more

to behold the man. This is not merely a different song from that Virgil sang: it is likewise different from that of the Victorians, and from that of their belated followers in our midst, who thought that they had done away with both the soldier and the artist and replaced him by the scientist, the engineer, the captain of industry, to whom they tended to give exclusive authority. They were confident in the capacity of the machine to solve all the problems that had been left unsolved by the traditional institutions of Church and State; and to eliminate the human element was for them the very key to ensuring accuracy, impartiality, efficiency. What the artist brought to life, his own humanity, his dreams and wishes, his sexual desires and his passions, his sensitive reactions to form, color, pattern, had no place in the factory or the scientific laboratory. So deep was this original bias against art, that Herbert Spencer believed that art belonged only to the childhood of the race, and would prove a superfluity if not an infantile regression in a mature, utilitarian society.

How far we have already emerged from that position today! At this very moment a great industrial corporation, itself a mas-

terpiece of technical invention and far-sighted organization, has begun to send its junior executives back to the university, hoping by this means to shake up and stir to fresh activity minds that have become too smugly routinized to continue, at a high level, the adventure that their less faithfully trained supervisors initiated. These people are not studying the latest techniques in business enterprise: they are studying history, philosophy, and art. This, it seems to me, is a salutary recognition of the fact that we are threatened with a tamping down of creative activities, not merely in the arts themselves, but in every other department, by our one-sided success in producing machines and mechanical collectives, and in adapting human existence to their necessities. Yet this new faith in the function of the arts and the role of the artist must not overlook the fact that the artist himself has too long been an unemployable person, or a displaced refugee in our civilization; and for lack of patronage and for lack of encouragement to perform his historic role, has lost some of his own self-confidence and has been tempted, too often, either to surrender wholesale to the machine, or to reject the need for active cooperation

and understanding on his own side.

For lack of faith in the present or an affectionate interest in the future, the serious artist in our time is often overcome with a feeling of nausea and despair, somewhat melodramatically expressed in the cult of existentialism, a feeling that carries the conviction that life itself is absurd and that all existence is existence toward death. In other words, the prescription for creativity cannot be reduced to the simple one of—Call in the artist. For the arts themselves have been depleted and hollowed out by the very forces that have been eroding other human aspects of our culture; and they, too, have often become depersonalized, over-mechanized, emptied of all but formal content; or at the other end of the scale, the artist has sought to reassert his maimed inner life by expressing the violent, the criminal, the excrementitious, the neurotic, in a spasm, so to say, of negative creativity. One of the problems of our age is not merely to restore the arts to a central place in life, but to restore life in its full dimensions to a central place in the arts.

Do not mistake my meaning here. There is no lack of individually brilliant achievements to reassure us of the continued vi-

ability of the arts. Modern architecture, for example, if it is sometimes unduly under the sway of narrow mechanical concepts, has been attacking some of the problems of form and order in our civilization with a new audacity, which no longer leans timidly on the dead forms of the past, but creates new forms of equal validity that give us a fresh image of the nature and potentialities of our age: witness the remarkable bank that has recently been constructed on Fifth Avenue. So again the new art of the motion picture, in dramas that are documents and documents that have become dramas, has shown a capacity to interpret the dynamic spirit of our age, though the playwright and the director who are to explore this medium to its limits have both, perhaps, yet to be born. All in all, there are enough manifestations of health and vitality in the arts to reassure us: yet somehow these sporadic achievements do not come together often enough, or react upon each other intimately enough, to exercise continuous command or to impress their creative vitality upon the drabber aspects of our routine and our environment. Not merely does our civilization, then, need the creative example of the artist; but

the artist himself equally needs a new kind of milieu, new sources of spiritual nourishment, a new sense of solidarity and comradeship, an access to the immense creative forces in our culture that have as yet hardly been tapped by the artist. Can the artist perhaps find this understanding and help in a great university, whose own foundations go down to the deepest strata of our culture? This is perhaps one of the questions we may profitably ask ourselves tonight.

The problem of uniting the arts and of replenishing the creative power of man is doubtless part of a much larger problem, that of arresting the destructive forces in our civilization and releasing its creative forces. In its larger aspects, that problem often seems, and may well actually be, beyond our conscious powers; but every specific attempt to establish a common point of departure and a common goal, is at least a step well taken to that larger goal. In the university, many efforts at synthesis and integration are now being made, and Columbia University has a long and honorable record of leadership in this department, beginning with the integration of the

humanities. Unfortunately, some of our remedies betray symptoms of the disease they are supposed to combat. Thus the need to re-establish communication between people who no longer share the same purposes or even speak the same ideological language, had led to the creation of a new race of specialists, the communications experts, who have added a new dimension to the non-communicable by inventing a special jargon for describing their mysterious art. Others, finding that values no longer govern human conduct, have created a new group of value analysers, called axiologists; and still others, holding that action is the key to salvation, now purpose to band together to invent still another specialism they propose to call Praxiology. Some of us have suggested that the specialists themselves need to be complemented by a new type of scholar, the generalist, who can keep the whole picture in focus; and still others, like my old master, Patrick Geddes, sought to create a common ideological framework which would bring together in dynamic interaction all the inter-related departments of life and thought.

I would say nothing by way of disparagement of these and similar

proposals for unity: indeed, I might even give my fraternal blessing to the communications experts if only I could understand what they are trying to communicate about communication. But the plain fact is that most of these prescriptions are of a purely intellectual nature: they leave out the artist, and what is worse, they leave out the whole world of form and feeling, of significance and ecstasy, of drama and symbolic interpretation, and formal synthesis by means of the work of art itself,

to which the artist has been, by his own nature and vocation, committed. So before we go further in our efforts to canvass the latent creative forces in our age, I should like to make a fresh diagnosis of our special predicament within the arts; and in particular, I should like to reappraise the historic relation—or as it will turn out on investigation, non-relation—of the creative arts to the university. We shall then perhaps recognize what a bold and important step Columbia is now seeking to make.

## Planning in a Free Society

*By Henry S. Churchill, F.A.I.A.*

Remarks to a meeting of the Philadelphia Young Planners Group, and first published in the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, from which they are reprinted by permission.

CITY PLANNING is curious art, or profession, or business or whatever it is. I think probably "profession" is the right word, because it professes to do so much and accomplishes so comparatively little. This is not wholly the fault of the professors. They do their best, but the odds are against them.

The odds are vested interest, public inertia, legal obfuscation, financial inadequacy, governmental red-tape, and, neither last nor least, lack of an objective for which to

plan. Perhaps city planning is too new a device to have developed an objective or a philosophy; on the other hand perhaps we planners, miseducated as we are, do not know that in order to plan we must look beyond tables of statistics.

It may seem odd to some of you that I even refer to city planning as "new." Surely planning goes back to the oldest cities of civilization. And too, in historic times how about Peking, the Rome of Sixtus and the Paris of Hauss-

mann, the New Towns of Palma Nuova and of Charleville, of Lima and Cartagena?

That was a different kind of planning. That was single-purpose physical planning, dictated planning. There was little economics in it, no sociology and certainly no democracy. It had little resemblance to our efforts at re-planning and redevelopment. It was architecture, engineering and great art, and I sometimes think we need today a lot more architecture and engineering and more respect for them as art. We have to live with what is built, not with social case histories or O and D counts. These have their place, but the place is in formulating the program, not in creating the design. A program is one thing, a design to be executed is another, and when that stage is reached the planner must be an architect and should be an artist. All the rest of city planning should lead up to that—the three-dimensional thing we have to live in and with.

This is not the City Beautiful, either, and that is where we again depart from the old city planning. The Paris behind the grand squares and the boulevards was—and is—largely a mess of foul old slums which, since we do not have

to live with them, we call “picturesque.” The once lovely and patrician cities of Charleville and Lima, and all the once-charming medieval towns, have swollen and suppulated into horrible industrial blots. The culture that created them passed away and a new culture took over. That culture too is on its way out, and here we are today in a transition period and, without any culture of our own, trying to bring order out of the chaos.



That chaos is not only in our physical cities, it is in our economics, our social order, our schooling, our governments and policies, our attitude towards the values of living. What else are fascism and communism and nazism except the revolt of a cultureless people against unbearable chaos? Democracy is a process and slow; it is to the everlasting credit of our city planners that they strive to work within the framework of democracy, even though it is the very process that is responsible for the agonizing frustration that you all endure. Despotism in a great age may produce Pope Sixtus and St. Peters or Louis XIV and Versailles, but

what would Robert McCormick or Joe McCarthy produce?

Planning today is not much like the old city planning, which perhaps it might be well to call not "city planning" but "civic design." Today we are chiefly concerned with repairing the old cities, trying to make them suitable for living in an age of technological devices which were originally meant to make living easier but which seem to have had quite the contrary result. Even if we were given dictatorial powers I doubt if we could resolve the problem as quickly as we sometimes think we could. Suppose tomorrow you start in to do what you liked with Philadelphia—what would you do? I'm sure I don't know what I would do. A city is a very complex organism, and must meet the needs and desires of all sorts of people, all sorts of business, all sorts of social requirements. The evils that we seek to eradicate are deeply a part of the complex, and physical change will not change the sources of evils, which are economic, social, human.

I do not think that the task of the planner is to accomplish social or economic reform: that way dogmatism lies, and authoritarianism of whatever complexion, right, left

or religious. The planner should try to understand the effect technology has on living, and to adapt the physical form of the city accordingly. The automobile, the airplane, the radio and television and atomic fission have changed the mode of living profoundly, yet we are biologically the same creatures and require much the same as we always have in the way of quiet, relaxation, family association, friends. The planner's job is to fit the old essential needs into a framework that will take care of the new mechanism, so that we can go from one to the other. A city is not the country, and urban living has its own particular delights, but the roar of the expressway or the stench of overcrowded, airless rooms is not part of the delight. Neither are traffic jams, poor schools and lack of beauty. It is up to the physical planner to provide ways by which the opposing requirements of our time can be, if not reconciled, at least brought into some sane relation with each other.

Underlying these highfalutin' notions are the everyday pressures of economics and politics. These pressures must be recognized and dealt with, or you are out of a job. But there is more than one way to

skin a cat; and if you have an idea and don't tell anyone, they may not recognize it and so perhaps will let you do it. Or maybe you can disguise it in such a welter of statistical tables that you can prove it to be desirable. After all, that is what statistics are for, and a good statistician is invaluable, particularly if he can talk fast. But seriously, half at least of the statistical work in planning isn't worth anything except to "prove" an obvious point and fortify an *a priori conclusion*. If you are really trying to plan for the future, statistical data of any kind, economic or physical or social are only a taking-off point. What you think of the future can only come from a feeling for trends, based on a knowledge of what is going on in the world of technology, and an intuitive understanding of people.

I want to say just a few words about the day-to-day job of planning—the problems of zoning, of sub-division, of trying to preserve the integrity of the Master Plan. Most of the zoning and most of the sub-division regulations in the country are outmoded, and their interpretation has bogged down into either an unwieldy mass of amendments or a series of subterfuges, often dishonest. The situa-

tion is very much like that of building codes: new materials, new techniques, new concepts have made them obsolete. There has been a great drive for revision, for a swing to the so-called "performance code" which is more flexible but also requires more competent administration. Zoning and subdivision regulations likewise need rewriting, and for the same reasons; but if the rewriting is to be effective we must also revise the administrative procedures. The lay Board of Adjustment is quite incompetent to interpret a flexible zoning law, and the Planning Commissions of small towns and villages likewise are not able to do a sound job of dealing with subdividers without the help of a capable technician.

Aside from technical defects in much zoning, there has also been developing a lamentable trend towards using it as a device for economic segregation and to extend its power into the field of esthetic censorship. This is true not only of suburban areas, where it is most obvious, but also in larger cities, where it is not so apparent. I believe planners should do all they can to combat these trends as un-American and un-democratic. This will not be easy, because the idea

of land-use segregation in its extreme form was a basic tenet in the early days of zoning, and now that the real-estate interests have latched on to it as a device for what they call the preservation of land values it will be very hard to stop the process.

However, these and most of the other difficulties that confuse and depress us are part of the price we pay for planning in a free society. The conflict of opposing interests is the essence of a democracy. It is valuable, too, in keeping the planner humble.



I think that one of the most urgent problems we have to study is that of looking to a solution of the urban pattern. I like the New Towns idea all right, because being opposed to something so pure and simple is like being opposed to virtue in women. You may not like your women virtuous, but you'd better not say so out loud. So, while I don't dislike the New Towns, and think it would be fun to plan one, I wouldn't live in one if you gave it to me. At present I wouldn't live in a big city, either, because I'm not only allergic to noise and carbon dioxide, but I like my children to have a decent edu-

cation. So I live in the suburbs, and that, while it is not fish, is foul. What we need is an urban pattern that makes sense.

Now we come to a question of What is urban? Again, definitions will differ with opinions, but also again, there is no difficulty in agreeing that rural, suburban, and urban have perfectly understandable common connotations. There are borderline places, too, that are by common consent neither one nor the other. Mount Vernon, adjacent to New York, is neither urban nor suburban; I suspect Camden is the Philadelphia equivalent. This is because they are adjacent to a greater urban center: remove them and they become urban, like Bridgeport, Conn., or Wilmington, Del. What I am getting at is that the idea of a city is quite understandable if indefinable. It involves, among other things, a high population density, a high degree of social anonymity with the concomitant of a very considerable freedom of action both moral and occupational, the stimulus of a variety of people, and the possibility of cultural improvement.

If you are going to have these things, I maintain you cannot plan them. They are of the essence of a city. All you can plan for is:

first, a traffic pattern; second, a concentration of population; third, a way by which a measure of quiet and safety can be obtained within the high concentration without interfering with the mobility and action of the population; and fourth, within such a framework complete liberty for the development of typical urban life and confusion.

I am not telling how to do it, I am posing the problem. I only know that the planner's ideal of complete segregation of land uses is absolutely the wrong answer for a city. People do not leave the farm to go to Podunk; if you try to make New York and Philadelphia an agglomeration of Podunks, you will happily fail. I think the neighborhood concept is nonsense. It is a return to the old idea of the political ward. Perhaps it has some meaning for the village, the New Town, for the habitations of the reluctant, the frustrated or the self satisfied. But it is most certainly not urban. Where it develops naturally, well and good—but its basis is entirely fortuitous, and unless it happens to have an ethnic base it is so fluid as to be meaningless. So don't plan neighborhoods—plan areas of action, of life, which means—and I say it

again—areas which are unplanned except in the broadest sense, so that the urban pattern of confusion can develop as it will.



As you have by now gathered, I am a firm believer in a reasonable amount of confusion and the opportunity for freedom of action, no matter what. One of my favorite quotations is that of Don Marquis, who said, "This I promise you, that in the Almost Perfect State everyone will have the right to go to Hell in his own way."

Allow, in your planning, for the elbow room necessary to do otherwise than what you consider perfection, because you may be, and probably are, wrong in your assumptions as to what perfection is for the other fellow. It is a rather fine point that I am trying to make. Of course you must have convictions; but a conviction is quite easy to come by, and is not necessarily right because it is yours. Try to plan broadly, so that different ways of living can find their place in the framework you create. Actually, the best planning, like the best government, is that which is least planned and least governing. Logically, of course that would mean none of either; unfortunately,

humans being what they are, that would mean chaos and anarchy. But there is an essential truth in

the aphorism, and I would phrase that truth this way: When you plan, consider the other fellow.

## Notice to Members *In re* Copyright of Standard Documents

**I**T HAS BEEN FOUND that some architects find it desirable, in their practice, at least for certain types of projects, to develop their own set of General Conditions instead of binding in the A.I.A. Standard General Conditions and adding such supplementary general conditions as the project requires. In doing so, they may sometimes copy exactly or in substance many of the A.I.A. Standard Articles.

It is necessary to point out that unless this is done with the express permission of The Institute and with a note to that effect, such procedure constitutes an infringement of The Institute's copyright. This copyright is a great asset to the profession and it is essential that it be protected. We are advised that if The Institute knowingly permits such infringement without protest, the copyright would be voided and The Institute would lose its sole right to publication.

The Institute believes that for

the very large majority of projects the Standard General Conditions are suitable and should be bound in as printed. This should be done, in any event, in the official signed copies of the contract. It is better practice to bind them in to all sets of the specifications. If, however, due to excessive numbers, or subdivided documents for segregated contracts, this becomes burdensome, the duplicate copies can include the General Conditions by reference.

Where an architect wishes to develop his own set of General Conditions but wishes to use substantial copies of some of the Standard Articles he should notify The Institute which will give him special permission to do so. There will be a nominal fee based upon the number of copies to be used and each copy shall include the following note indicating such approval:

"Quotations herein from Standard Documents copyrighted by The American Institute of Ar-

chitects are used by its permission."

The Institute, however, is of the opinion that such a procedure is not desirable, as the Standard provisions cannot readily be recognized as such unless used in their standard printed form. It believes that in most cases a few supplementary General Conditions can be drafted

to cover important amendments of certain Articles and urges architects to use this procedure which is a common practice in many architectural offices.

If, nevertheless, the other procedure is felt to be necessary in special cases, the approval of The Institute should be obtained as outlined above.

## To GOLDY

*From Hubertus Junius*

Time is the warp on which each man must weave  
The pattern of his acts.  
No hopes, no loves, no wishes or desires  
But only facts  
May color patterns willed to our posterity.  
But some on whom Dame Fortune smiles  
Are privileged to instruct  
And guide the thoughts of growing youthful minds  
And thus induct  
Bright truths of flashing clarity.  
And on a thousand boards throughout the land  
Where your disciples sit  
Devising things to house both gods and man  
You shall have a bit  
Of every plan and plat.  
For each, as memory serves with clever line  
His eager finger tips  
Must say with joy in each bright new design  
And kindly smiling lips,  
"Now, Goldy taught me that."

To Goldwin Goldsmith, F.A.I.A., on the occasion of his premature decision, Feb. 1st, 1955, at the age of 83 to retire from the Faculty of the University of Texas.

MARCH, 1955



## The First Pitched Roof

*By Herodotus Jones*

In the days when the Greeks were confined to the creeks  
Of the fast-flowing Danube and the green field surrounding,  
This protected location induced propagation  
And the Greeks multiplied in a manner astounding.  
This sudden congestion soon raised the question  
Of how to house the excess population.  
The caves were so packed that the people all lacked  
Both cooking facilities and sanitation.  
Said a leader named Cleo, "We must quit being Neo,  
And devise an adequate civilization.  
Make faucets and drains, figure stresses and strains,  
And invent a few digits for quick calculation."  
Now the Greeks all agreed that their very first need  
Were houses designed to relieve this congestion.  
But the shape and the size, and the way to devise  
A refuge from weather, was a much mooted question.  
A builder named Philo invented a silo  
Of rock and of mud, with a flat timbered roof.  
And upon its completion advised all the Grecian  
Homeseekers, his structures were quite weatherproof.  
But the people complained that as soon as it rained  
The roof leaked like fury all over the place.  
So old Grandma Flora shouted, "Clear the Agora  
"This lack of perception is a racial disgrace.  
"All people of gumption know form follows function.  
"Under present conditions we couldn't be wetter.  
"For me I mean to construct a lean-to  
"On top of those walls 'till I find something better."  
So in spite of their laughter she fashioned a rafter  
And shed the rainwater right down to the eaves.

She thatched it with rushes and wild sumac bushes  
And covered the whole with a layer of leaves.  
Through many millennia just many and many a  
Man has attempted to change or distort a  
Pitched roof, but in vain the facts yet remain  
A pitched roof is still the best way to shed water.



## They Say:

**Frank Lloyd Wright**

(*In "The Natural House," his recently published book*)

What I am here calling integral ornament is founded upon the same organic simplicities as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, that amazing revolution in tumult and splendor of sound built on four tones based upon a rhythm a child could play on the piano with one finger. Supreme imagination reared the four repeated tones, simple rhythms, into a great symphonic poem that is probably the noblest thought-built edifice in our world. And architecture is like music in this capacity for the symphony.

**Peter Shepheard**

(*In his inaugural address as President of The Architectural Association, London, October 27, 1954*)

This may be a personal feeling of mine based on the idea that modern architecture has now arrived at a point where it is more important to refine and humanise than

to innovate. A good deal of crudity, of lack of careful detailing, mars many good modern buildings; almost one gets the impression that some architects consider it slightly sissy to fret too much about the profile of a sill or the thickness of a window bar, or the exact size of the beams and columns, drips and eaves on which the whole tautness and scale of the building depends. It is by considering such things as these that the Greeks produced the Parthenon: no striving for new form, but all refining of their simple old barn-shaped temple, than which you could hardly imagine a duller building shape. But by an invisible curve to produce a visible straightness, an entasis to produce visible tension, by weighing the exact breadth and depth of each shadow, by constant collaboration with the sun, each groove and flute was made to add something to the

miraculous tautness of the whole. This it seems to me is what modern architecture now needs, and it can only be provided by a patient study of the effects of light on textures and forms. Even a brutal building needs to be detailed.

**Walter Gropius, F.A.I.A.**

(*In an address of January 14, 1955*)

When I studied last summer the philosophy of Zen Buddhism in Japan, which has so deeply influenced the finest architecture of that country, I came across a statement that seemed to characterize the relationship of technique and intuition masterfully in a few short words: "Develop an infallible technique and then place yourself at the mercy of inspiration."

**Gwilym A. Price**

PRESIDENT, WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC CORP.

(*In his year-end statement*)

As open warfare was halted throughout the world for the first time in more than 20 years, the American economy during 1954 finally came face to face with the challenge of peace—a challenge which is being met successfully. With only the slightest hesitation frequently accompanying a shift of gears, American industry is again picking up speed. Although we still are producing for the nation's long-range defense program, Amer-

ica has proved that continuing prosperity need not depend on war. This is not to say that 1954 did not bring difficult problems for the economy nor that they all have been solved. Despite this, however, an average of 61 million people were employed and the nation's gross national product was down but two per cent from the 1953 peak. The outlook for 1955 indicates that both employment and gross national product will move upward an estimated two per cent.

**Carl Koch**

(*In an address before the NAHB meeting in Chicago, Jan. 17, 1955*)

Anyone who continues to count on localism or regionalism in home design does so at his economic peril. As the world continues to grow smaller, a builder must be aware of houses and their design, not just in his immediate area, but all over the country.

**Lewis Mumford**

(*From "The Sky Line" in The New Yorker, October 23, 1954*)

Oddly, there has been no fundamental advance in skyscraper design since the eighteen-nineties. The present most fashionable model, the tall, thin slab, exemplified by the United Nations Secretariat, by Lever House, and by a new structure at 430 Park Avenue, goes back to Burnham & Root's

design for the Monadnock Building, in Chicago (1889), which was sixteen stories high and had light and air on all four sides. The slab form is an ideal one for providing

light and air, but it is as outmoded as a Roman colonnade in a day when air-conditioning and effective artificial indoor lighting are commonplaces.



## Honors

To JOHN MURRAY EASTON, Past President and Fellow of the R.I.B.A., Her Majesty the Queen, on the recommendation of the Royal Institute of British Architects, has awarded the 1955 Royal Gold Medal.

PIETRO BELLUSCHI, F.A.I.A., has been elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters—the only architect elected in this annual addition to the membership.

WILLIAM LESCAZE, F.A.I.A., has been presented a citation by Temple University's Stella Elkins Tyler School of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, and given a one-man show of his work.

WILLIAM CHARLES HAYS, F.A.I.A., Professor Emeritus of Architecture at the University of California, has received the Honorary Award of the Building Industry Conference Board. Profes-

sor Hays and Atholl McBean were named the Bay Area construction industry's "men of the year."

WILLIAM M. HAUSSMAN, Chief Architect of the Office of National Capital Parks, has been decorated by the government of the Netherlands and made a knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau. The recognition was for his work in connection with the carillon recently given to this country by the Netherlands.

In Britain's New Year Honours list W. H. ANSELL, past president of R.I.B.A., receives C.B.E. (Commander of the British Empire). Also given a C.B.E. is HARRY STUART GOODHART-RENDENDEL, also a past president. MICHAEL VENTRIS, who deciphered the Mycenaen script, an achievement acclaimed all over the world, was named an Officer of the British Empire.



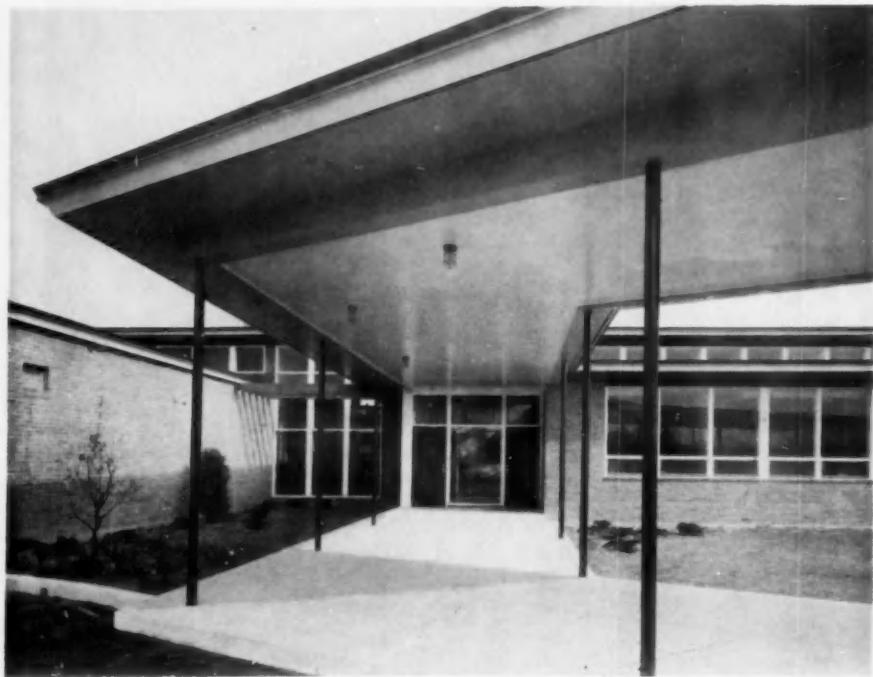
*Photograph by Gotscho-Schleisner*

ENTRANCE DETAIL, HOUSE OF FRANK N. HORTON  
PAUL BEACH, FLA.

WYETH, KING & JOHNSON, ARCHITECTS

Favorite Features of  
recently elected Fellows:  
Marion Sims Wyeth, F.A.I.A.

*Journal  
The AIA*



*Photograph by Ben Schnall*

COVERED ENTRANCE, WM. W. M. HENRY COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL

DOVER, DEL.

VICTORINE AND SAMUEL HOMSEY, ARCHITECTS

Favorite Features of  
recently elected Fellows:  
Samuel E. Homsey, F.A.I.A.

*Journal*  
*The AIA*

## Vanbrugh's Battle of Blenheim

SIR JOHN'S EXPERIENCE WITH A LADY CLIENT

*By George H. Herrick*

THE tiny Bavarian village of Blenheim was the scene of the Duke of Marlborough's signal victory over the French in 1704. So impressed were parliament and the queen, that a palace to be constructed upon the grounds of the royal manor at Woodstock was promptly approved to honor the duke's triumph.

Many a British brow wrinkled in surprise when John Vanbrugh, a dramatist, was named architect instead of Christopher Wren. When the British thought of Vanbrugh, they thought of the writer of such bawdy and frothy comedies as "The Relapse," "The Provok'd Wife," and "The Confederacy" which made him a luminary of the Restoration stage. The idea that this designer of boudoir plots could design not merely boudoirs, but entire palaces, strained the credulity of many Britishers.

Nevertheless, John Vanbrugh, despite only scant training, served as architect for his own opera house, a gigantic affair. Furthermore, he had scored a bull's-eye with the one castle that he had

planned. In 1701 work was begun on Castle Howard for the Earl of Carlisle, and the wooden model so delighted King William III that Vanbrugh was immediately proclaimed Comptroller of the Board of Works, the royal body of architects headed by Wren.

Although Castle Howard was not finished until 1714, the earl was so pleased with its baroque splendor and with his architect that he secured a place for Vanbrugh in the College of Heralds. Shortly thereafter he elevated Vanbrugh to the coveted post of King at Arms.

With his next vast project, Blenheim Castle, Vanbrugh had high hopes of bestowing an even greater measure of immortality upon the Duke of Marlborough and, incidentally, upon himself. He must have been a happy man on that June day in 1705 when the foundation stone was laid at Woodstock, and still happier as he sipped claret with the nobility and watched the festive morris dances celebrating the event.

He found the attractive Lady

Marlborough to be a charming woman, keenly interested in the plans for Castle Blenheim. As the work went on, however, Vanbrugh became alarmed rather than charmed by the duchess, whose interest proved so keen that it cut deeply into many of the architect's schemes.

Vanbrugh considered mere time and money as purely secondary in erecting the massive masterpiece that was to be Blenheim. Lady Marlborough was primarily interested in the rapid construction of the palace in which she wished to live and to entertain. She wanted to be certain, furthermore, that the castle could be completed without too great a drain upon the funds provided by the queen. To Vanbrugh, the duchess seemed a hideously practical woman with no sincere interest in the fine arts. When she strenuously objected to paying seven and one-half pence per bushel for lime, and when she further expressed doubts as to the correctness of the measure of lime received, Vanbrugh's patience began to wane. In 1707 stone and labor costs increased, and Vanbrugh was exasperated when she denied him authority to pay a penny more per foot for the construction of the castle.

Unfortunately, the Duke of Marlborough, usually able to arbitrate the differences between his wife and his architect, was frequently absent in the pursuit of his military career and the French army.



Vanbrugh, himself, did little to ease the strained relationships at Blenheim. His lofty esthetic instincts constantly got the better of him, as when the inspiration seized him to renovate the original Woodstock manor in order to bring it into harmony with the design of the new structure. Believing that he was merely trying to prolong the construction of Blenheim, Lady Marlborough flatly rejected this request, and angrily accused Vanbrugh of wanting the manor rebuilt so that he might live in it in luxurious ease and comfort through the years as he directed the disgracefully slow work on the palace.

Not content with wrangling with her architect, the duchess plunged into still another quarrel, this time with Queen Anne. This verbal duel left the queen no flaming desire to continue providing funds for a palace to be the residence of Lady Marlborough. Construction was continued, nonethe-

less, at sporadic intervals until December 31, 1711, when the duke was dismissed from all governmental offices. The following year, he and the duchess went to the Continent and did not return until the day Queen Anne died, August 1, 1714. Under King George I, the Duke of Marlborough resumed his place with the government. To the chagrin of the duchess, he introduced John Vanbrugh to court and saw that the architect was knighted on September 19, 1714.



Early in the summer of the next year, the building of Blenheim began anew, and so did Vanbrugh's skirmishes with Lady Marlborough. Not only did he settle himself in Woodstock Manor, but he also conceived another grandiose plan. Vanbrugh, in looking over the grounds of Blenheim, decided that something was lacking. A bridge, he thought, was definitely needed, but unfortunately there was nothing except a small ditch to bridge. To Vanbrugh, a quaint little rustic bridge was out of the question. Only a mighty span would be appropriate for Blenheim. The canny architect also knew that the duchess would never

approve such a structure to bridge only an insignificant ditch. By altering the courses of some of the streams on the estate, Vanbrugh soon had a miniature river inundating the ditch and necessitating the erection of a bridge.

As might have been anticipated, Lady Marlborough was livid with rage at the mere thought of the bridge. In a letter to a friend she described the "chaos" wrought by Vanbrugh at Blenheim and added: "It will cost an immense sum to complete the causeway, and that ridiculous bridge, in which I counted 33 rooms. Four houses are to be at each corner of the bridge; but that which makes it so much prettier than London Bridge is, that you may sit in six rooms and look out at (*sic*) window into the high arch, while the coaches are driving over your head."

Actually, the duchess had good cause to keep a tight rein on the expenditures. The cost of Castle Blenheim, originally estimated at £100,000, had already soared to £195,000, and, according to Vanbrugh, £87,000 additional would be required to secure its completion. Lady Marlborough fully realized that the estimated expense of finishing the castle did not include sums for any future dreams of the archi-

tect to increase its beauty and grandeur.

Although Vanbrugh's respect for the Duke of Marlborough remained unchanged, his conflicts with the duchess increased in frequency and intensity. Finally, in November, 1716, the architect's battle of Blenheim reached its climax with Lady Marlborough's charges that he was either seeking to sabotage the construction of the castle to such an extent that it would never be finished, or was trying to make it so costly that the Marlborough fortune would be exhausted in effecting its completion. These accusations were made while the duke was seriously ill and filled some twenty to thirty pages given to a building contractor by Lady Marlborough. Vanbrugh soon learned of her actions and, blazing with anger, he wrote the noblewoman declaring that her papers were "full of far-fetched, laboured accusations, mistaken facts, wrong inferences, groundless jealousies and strained constructions." He fumed still more, saying, "I will never trouble you more, unless the Duke of Marlborough recovers so far as to shelter me from such intolerable treatment." Thus, after an eleven-year campaign, Vanbrugh retreated from Blenheim, leaving

his assistant, the able Nicholas Hawksmoor in charge.

Vanbrugh was, nevertheless, to hear more from the duchess when, in the spring of 1718, two contractors sued the duke for £7,314 owed them for work done in 1710. Since the architect's name appeared upon some of the contracts, he, too, was named a defendant. The duke was again in poor health and the ever-vigilant duchess sought to shift the full responsibility to Vanbrugh. So intent was she in implicating him that she had tracts printed and circulated defaming the architect's character and ability. A court ruling clearing Vanbrugh of any responsibility in the suit left her completely frustrated.

During the ensuing seven years, he endeavored to collect £2,000 still due him for his services at Blenheim, but met with no success. Then, in 1725, Vanbrugh committed the tactical blunder of accompanying his wife and Lady Carlisle to Blenheim's stronghold. The duke had been in his grave for three years and the duchess ruled supreme.

The effectiveness with which she blasted his plans to show his spouse the buildings and grounds is told by Vanbrugh in a letter to Jacob Tonson, a bookseller: "We stayed

two nights in Woodstock . . . but there was an order to the servants, *under her Grace's own hand, not to let me enter Blenheim!* and lest that should not mortify me enough, she having somehow learned that my wife was of the company, *sent an express the night before we came there*, with orders that if she came with the Castle Howard ladies, the servants should not suffer her to see either house, gardens, or even to enter the park; so she was forced to sit all day and keep me company at the inn."

The last shot in Sir John Vanbrugh's battle of Blenheim was fired, nonetheless, by the architect in October of the same year. It was then that he obtained the aid of Robert Walpole, the prime minister of England, in securing

his £2,000 fee from the Duchess of Marlborough. How Walpole performed the operation remains a mystery, but he did succeed in extracting the entire sum from Lady Marlborough to the delight of Vanbrugh.

For all purposes, practical or impractical, this ended the architect's lengthy battle over Castle Blenheim. Sir John Vanbrugh's victory in that struggle was surely not as complete as that of the Duke of Marlborough in his Battle of Blenheim. Yet, despite formidable opposition, Vanbrugh's objective was unquestionably attained. He succeeded in giving the English a monumental work of baroque architecture worthy of being linked with the names of the illustrious military leader—and himself.

## Campaign of The American Architectural Foundation

*By Clair W. Ditchy, F.A.I.A.*

RESEARCH is the primary and basic need of the architectural profession. The Institute is in daily touch with various efforts in the field of research. Some are made by the businesses producing materials; others are by scientists following paths of what is called

"pure" research, usually without direct contact with the architect's professional needs. However, all these efforts put together—and we are thankful for them—are pitifully inadequate for the service of what has become the nation's largest industry. A look about at

what others are doing should shame us. M.I.T. alone is working on research projects totalling \$14 million; Battelle Memorial Institute pours \$9 million into research each year; the efforts of medical research show \$180 million spent in 1953.

What is the architectural profession doing in trying to find better ways of improving mankind's environment? Plenty of individual effort, certainly, but that's not enough. Teamwork, organization and research must be harnessed to individual effort if we are to keep abreast of other forward-looking professions in serving mankind.

The Institute is legally classed as a trade association, although nonprofit. Owing to tax law re-

strictions, it is not in a position to solicit funds for such research programs, not being able to assure donors of tax deductions for gifts. The Institute, however, has watched with much interest the development of a research program plan of The American Architectural Foundation, an organization conducted by and solely in the interest of architects. The A.I.A. has been informed of the current campaign by The Foundation, seeking donations to its Research Fund. The Institute heartily endorses this campaign, considering the building up of a research fund in the hands of The Foundation as a desirable activity in the interest of the architectural profession.

## Books & Bulletins

**THE HEAD AND HEART OF THOMAS JEFFERSON.** By John Dos Passos. 446 pp.  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $8\frac{3}{4}$ ". Garden City, N. Y.: 1954: Doubleday & Co., Inc. \$5

A character study, beginning with Jefferson's forebears and ending before the Capital was moved to Washington. The author leads us to know Jefferson's motives behind his consistent actions, although this adds nothing to Fiske Kimball's book, "Thomas Jeffer-

son, Architect," in telling us of Jefferson, the architect.

**EMERSON AND GREENOUGH.** By Charles R. Metzger. 158 pp.  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $8\frac{3}{8}$ ". Berkeley & Los Angeles: 1954: University of California Press. \$3

A work that has long been needed in developing the philosophy and esthetics of two of America's chief pioneers in this field. Emerson spoke of Greenough as "a sculptor, but whose tongue was far

cunninger in talk than his chisel to carve." Springing from the background of the transcendentalists, the two men became friends and each left an impress on our ideas of form and function that has only recently been appreciated.

**ACCELERATED URBAN GROWTH IN A METROPOLITAN FRINGE AREA.** By Institute for Urban Studies, University of Pennsylvania, with the cooperation of Bureau of Urban Research, Princeton University. Vol. I—Summary Report, 94 pp., 8½" x 10¾", \$2. Vol. II—Project Report, 394 pp., 8½" x 10¾", \$4. Both \$5. Philadelphia: 1954: Institute for Urban Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

In accordance with our recently developed practice of building a new community quickly for a purpose—such as Willow Run, Oak Ridge and the like—The Institute for Urban Studies focused its attention on what was to become Fairless, Bucks County, Pa., with its scholarly study of land uses, housing, schools, recreation, transportation, governmental relations and many more phases of the problem.

**CITY PLANNING AT YALE.** Edited by Christopher Tunnard and John N. Pearce. 86 pp. 6" x 9¼". New Haven, Conn.: 1954: Graduate Program in

City Planning, Dept. of Architecture, Yale University. \$1.50

A selection of the projects and their description by members of the Graduate Program in City Planning. These are prefaced by contributions by Fiske Kimball on Thomas Jefferson and Civic Art, by Elbert Peets on the Arlington Memorial Bridge Sculpture, by Frank Robbins Chapman, Jr. on the St. Lawrence Seaway, and by other significant papers.

**A TREASURY OF CONTEMPORARY HOUSES.** Selected by the Editors of *Architectural Record*. 222 pp. 8½" x 11½". New York: 1954: F. W. Dodge Corp. \$5.95

Some of the most representative examples of contemporary residential work which have heretofore appeared in the *Architectural Record* and are now conveniently gathered together between book covers.

**THE BOMB, SURVIVAL AND YOU.** By Fred N. Severud and Anthony F. Merrill. 264 pp. 6" x 9". New York: 1954: Reinhold Publishing Corp. \$5.95

If you too are wondering about what to do about building to withstand blast, this book is for you. At the present time the client is the only one to decide whether he wants to build in bomb protection. In that case his architect is the natural source of information as to

ways, means and costs. Fred Severud, the eminent engineer, and Anthony Merrill, who writes convincing English, have given you in this book perhaps all that is presently available in this field of specialized knowledge.

**HOUSING REHABILITATION.** 34 pp. 6" x 9". Boston: 1954: Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Division of Sanitary Engineering. Free

An administrative guide for community action, developed by the Massachusetts authorities, answering the questions of community health officials.

**HOUSING DESIGN.** By Eugene Henry Klaber. 248 pp. 8½" x 10¼". New York: 1954: Reinhold Publishing Corp. \$8.50

Eugene Klaber, F.A.I.A., has had a maximum of experience as architect, town planner and government consultant in the field of housing. His book is a down-to-earth, factual guide, illustrated entirely with United States examples. A "must" book in the field of multiple dwellings.

**WALTER GROPIUS: WORK AND TEAMWORK.** By S. Giedion. 254 pp. 7½" x 10". New York: 1954: Reinhold Publishing Corp. \$10

After Gropius received the first São Paulo Prize for Architecture, given by the Matarazzo Foundation,

the donors persuaded Dr. Giedion to prepare this account of Gropius's development as designer, teacher and architect. Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier contribute appreciations, and the author reveals to us not only Gropius but the development of the whole modern movement. A complete list of Gropius's works is included.

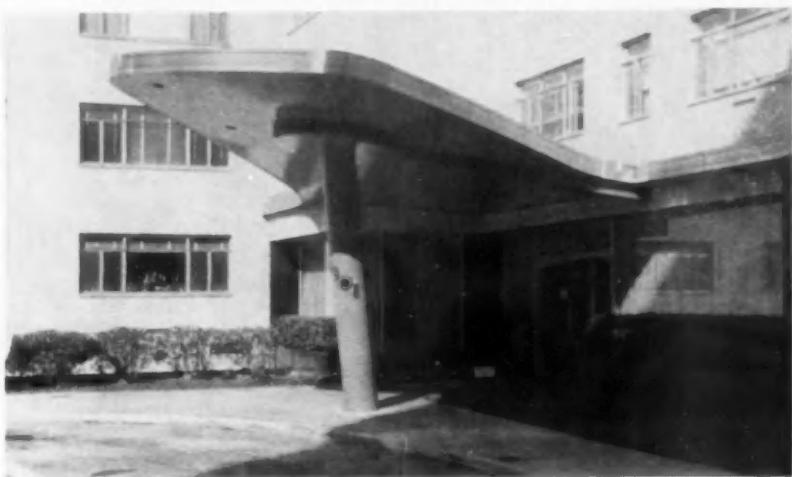
**THE ENGLISH MEDIEVAL PARISH CHURCH.** By G. H. Cook. 302 pp. 5⅔" x 8½". London: 1954: Phoenix House. Distributed by The Macmillan Company. \$7.50

In our admiration of the architectural flowering of medievalism in cathedral and monastic structures we are likely to forget the simple dignity and beauty of the parish church of the same period. Here is a commendable balance of architectural development, religious life of the times, and the local historical details. Illustrated with many plates and photographs.

**THE NATURAL HOUSE.** By Frank Lloyd Wright. 226 pp. 8" x 10". New York: 1954: Horizon Press. \$6.50

Perhaps the most readable and understandable of Wright's writings. There is less of the mystical philosophy and more of his practical findings in the use of materials and appropriate form for the dwelling of moderate size.

R A I S E D   E Y E B R O W   D E P A R T M E N T

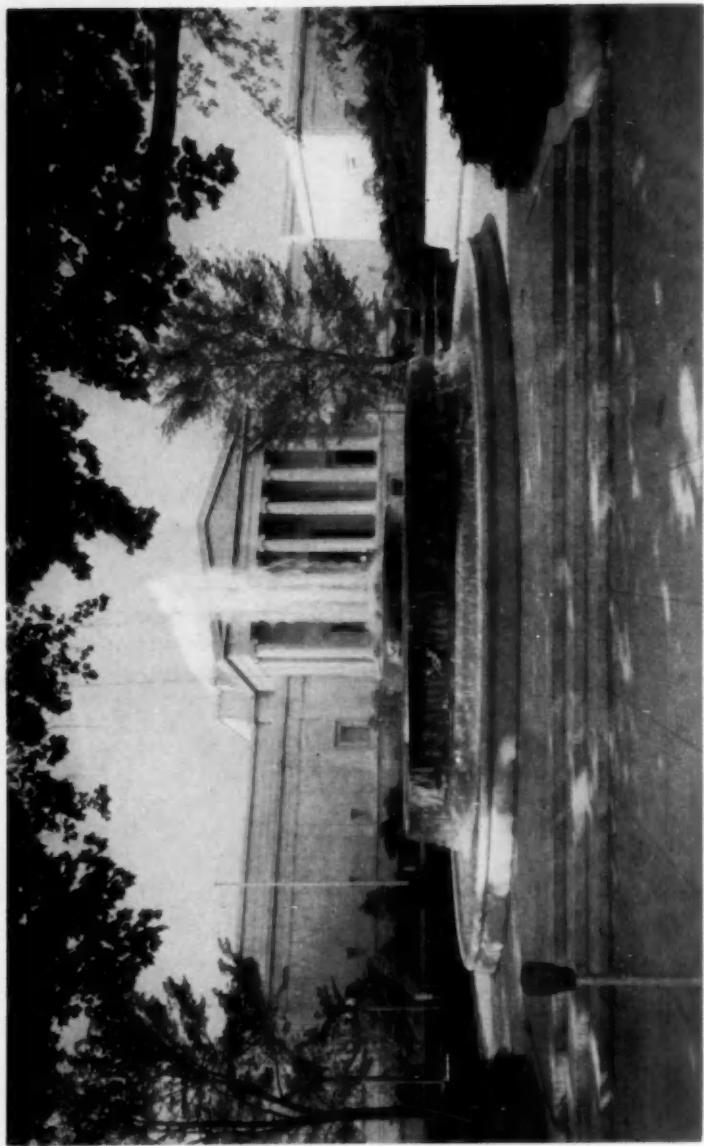


*Is the leaning column a whim of the designer  
or the result of a napping supervisor?*

*The pigeons, too, were depositors, hence  
the bras on the Ionic volutes.*



*Journal  
of the AIA*



THE ANDREW W. MELLON MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN, WASHINGTON, D. C.  
EGGERS & HIGGINS, ARCHITECTS; SIDNEY WAUGH, SCULPTOR; CLARKE & RAPUANO, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

## S.A.H. Book Award for 1954

THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS again announces its award for the outstanding contribution during the year to the history of architecture. The 1954 award goes to Henry-Russell Hitchcock for his two-volume "Early Victorian Architecture in Britain."

The jury: Professor Carroll L. V. Meeks of Yale, Chairman, and Professors Paul Norton, Pennsylvania State; Thomas J. McCormick, Smith College; Walter Kreese, University of Louisville, and George Heard Hamilton of Yale. Mr. Hitchcock is Professor of Art at Smith College and also Director of the Smith College Museum.

## Calendar

*March 9-11; 16-18:* Williamsburg Garden Symposium of two 3-day sessions, of particular interest to landscape architects. Details from Williamsburg Garden Symposium, Goodwin Building, Williamsburg, Va.

*March 13-April 8:* Eighth Annual Open House Series of Charleston's Historic Private Homes. Details from Historic Charleston Foundation, 94 Church Street, Charleston, S. C.

*April 4-5:* Judgment of A.I.A. 1955 Honor Awards Program at The Octagon, Washington, D. C.

*April 23-30:* Historic Garden Week in Virginia, the proceeds of which are to go to the restoration of Woodlawn Plantation. Further details from Mrs. Irving L. Matthews, Jefferson Hotel, Richmond 19, Va.

*April 28-30:* Regional Conference of the Western Mountain District, Camelback Inn, Phoenix, Ariz.

*May 5-7:* Regional Conference of the South Atlantic District, Fort Sumter Hotel, Charleston, S. C.

*May 12-13:* "Automation-Engineering for Tomorrow," a symposium sponsored by Michigan State College, School of Engineering, East Lansing, Mich. Further details from W. I. Kenerson of the School of Engineering.

*May 29-June 3:* Ninth International Hospital Congress of the International Hospital Federation, Lucerne, Switzerland. Further details from Capt. J. E. Stone, 10 Old Jewry, London E. C. 2.

*May 31-June 3:* Technical Conference and Exposition devoted to the problems of design engineers, Convention Hall, Philadelphia.

*June 8-11:* British Architects Conference, at the invitation of the West Yorkshire Society of Architects, Harrogate. Visitors from the U. S. are welcome and, if planning to attend, should advise C. D. Spragg, Secretary, R.I.B.A., 66 Portland Place, London W.1, so that he may send them the Conference program.

*June 13-18:* International Design Conference, Aspen Institute, Aspen, Colo. Details from Charles W. Saul, The Aspen Company, Aspen, Colo.

*June 20-23:* Ninth annual meeting of Forest Products Research Society, Seattle, Wash. Further details from Perry Culp, Jr., 601 Tacoma Building, Tacoma, Wash.

*July 9-16:* Fourth Congress of the Union Internationale des Architectes, The Hague-Scheveningen, The Netherlands—a meeting devoted especially to the development of house-building.

*July 14-August 24:* Sixth Annual  
Architecture and Planning Workshop,  
Instituto Tecnologico de Monterrey,  
Mexico.

*July 15-Sept. 15:* Summer School of

the Cercle Culturel de Royaumont—a continuous series of two-weeks courses for foreign students. Details from M. le Directeur, Asnières-sur Oise, S. et O., France.

## Where Do You Go From Here?

IN THREE PARTS—PART III

*By Ralph Walker, F.A.I.A.*

The mature architect looks at the architectural student and at the distractions which may warp his philosophy. An address at Syracuse University, April 30, 1954.

WHEN THE ARCHITECTS of the Baroque developed their amazing perspectives they positively directed the mind, the body—all of their sensations—to a definite focus, to the end that "the Church," the "Ruler," were symbolized, were exemplified by the forms achieved. It was an age which dynamically, plastically, used space and form with the quality of greatness—regardless of how they built. Even one of the worst of the magnitudes, St. Peter's, has a majesty in its totality. So, too, the Gothic cathedral molds space into worshipfulness, into prayerfulness—the structure again lending itself in striking imagination to the end desired. Had anyone told Ictinus that stone could ascend such heights, in such lacy effects, he would have looked at the narrator in unbelieving wonder. Consider

the priest-architect of Luxor, enamored with gargantuan stones, being told that the material could be used as in the delicate traceries of Sainte Chappelle. Durability sought not only stone but also brick, metal, glass and timber—all to be stressed to the ultimate of the then present-day knowledge and desire.

The whole cult of the primitive enhanced by gobs of raw color, the ubiquitous bucket chair, the sculpture directly inspired by savage Africa or a tortured and twisted intestine, the continual use of the words "clean" and "simple" to cover a poverty in creation—all of these indicate, to one who consciously is aware of the great periods of man's work, an anonymous sterility; and so, as the politicians say, a change in viewpoint seems surely needed.

Two years ago the students at Harvard undertook to solve a problem in the development of Block Island. It had a large press notice in the *New York Times*. The whole group of designs was truly astounding in its lack of appreciation of the natural qualities of the island. I have not seen the island in many years, but I understand it is very little changed. It still represents one of the unspoiled pieces of nature near the over-populated conurbation which extends along the Atlantic coast line. The designs were inhuman in scale—totally disregarding the possibilities of an architecture related to the beauties of land and sea—stupid copies of the works of Le Corbusier and Niemeyer at their very worst. Frankly, I have wondered who led them into such enormities, into believing that any real greatness could come out of such magnitudes, such as a building a mile long. The sad thing about all the designs was that the simplicity most wanted, namely that simplicity of human behavior, had been complicated by the dreadful geometry of all the schemes.

Does this sound like the maundurings of an old fogey? If so, may I give you my definition of one? An old fogey is one who was in

fashion thirty years ago, a progressive is one who is apt to be an old fogey thirty years from now; while the creative artist, the growing individual—looked at askance through most of his life—collects his medals at eighty, and at that age he is apparently just as spry in collecting medals as he might have been at forty.



Granted the architecture of the 'twenties needed a purging of the eclecticism of the too well-printed centuries, might we not say now that a new cathartic is necessary to cleanse us of the even narrower eclecticism of the last thirty years?

Shall we expect in your future an anonymous collaborative eclecticism of the few motifs generated by the present steel shapes and a possible enlargement of the sheet of glass? Shall we use the Baroque possibilities of concrete to obtain chapels like that at Phamphulia, which no one wants because it lacks religiosity, and which in these times is astoundingly deficient in the use of scientific acoustic knowledge? Shall we continue to think of mankind as deserving only insect hives; or shall we use the qualities of management, unsurpassed in any age, to give each man, each woman,

each family, those basic qualities which every man now too often vainly seeks—the enrichment of the human soul?

Remember we are architects and not manufacturers. We should at least try to give each man a shelter—not a shell, not a cell—but *an organism in which he can grow*, in which his family may have the sense of a unit, and in that unity the certain security which comes of the simplest and most desirable community of interests.

What of you and the future of architectural needs? Remember the ugly city; remember the house, clever but lacking in refinements; remember the school, the public buildings all resembling the factory—all without interest except that bred of economy; with rare use of those amenities of sculpture and painting which have always denoted man's desire to express through the arts his ideals of greater harmonies.

A young man on the Rio Grande said to me: "You must admit we have taken the useless feathers off architecture." I admitted it to be so, asking him, however, what the electric sign-maker had replaced them with—with or without his help.

The auto, the airplane, the space-

ship—with all their appeal to man's sense of progress—are really nothing other than the erector sets of childhood; a little larger, a little more difficult, but nevertheless still the erector sets of an adolescent culture. So, too, is the entire theory of constructivism, as applied to building, an erector-set philosophy; for beyond the structure is the needed background for the development of a further capacity for life—as simple, as rich, even as austere as may need be, but never meager, because it is not necessary to be rich to be enriched in life's experience.

As one looks at the stark concrete frame of a building one must admit its clean lines and sense of design, but once you admit that the skeleton alone is insufficient for shelter needs and that the bones need a skin to protect the interior, then the skin becomes a matter of whatever ardent experience man can bring forth to create delight as well as strength.



As you go into practice, whether as individuals or as collaborators, your job will be to teach others how to live by creating surroundings in which they can grow. But to teach others, you yourself must

continually grow in individuality; you, too, must realize the greatness possible in acquired experience, in the broad advantages of a native culture, in the depths of sentiment and, finally, in the paucity to be found in pure rationalism.

What the skin-and-bones philosophy needs most is a blood transfusion of individuality, so that the heartbeat of humanism may be heard once again. The skin-and-bones philosophy needs not only flesh, but much more it needs new inspiration and a glowing imagination as well. In particular it needs a new viewpoint to be gained by youth, so that youth's own middle-age may finally contribute to architectural progress and to human betterment.

A young man from M.I.T. came in to see me the other day. He was very much discouraged. He said he had wanted to become an architect because he believed buildings were designed to serve men, but he was beginning to think that buildings were designed as stunts to increase the egotism of the designer. The individual designer, however, must exist with a feeling of self-importance, and at the same time, he must create the symbols which give meanings to his community.

"The symbols needed are those of human greatness, of the far searchings of the human intelligence, of the human soul's aspirations toward hope, compassion and love, of humanity as a stirring ideal, its enhancement as a possible goal.

"The problem confronting the visual arts is to raise the needed stimulus from meager experience into greater emotions, from cubist patterns within small frames to the far-reaching passions generated by a wall, from a few twisted strands of wire or of putty to the largeness of man; man, not known as 'common,' man, not known as 'uncommon'—but man, in his full powers: physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and as the true inheritor of his amazing and growing past, and powers.

"Buildings should once again be sculpturesque in themselves, demanding a tapestry in depth rather than just plastic constructivism. All great buildings in the past have revealed the richness possible in high-relief and round sculpture—in definite positions and within rational limitations. The buildings for humanity should achieve a larger dignity—not just places for work or living—now too often expressed in minima.

"Should the visual arts, regardless of strife, war, chaos, poverty, all too common in every era, offer this leadership a future, brilliant and at the same time human, which will develop a renascence; one which will offer the world the creative powers so vitally necessary to save it from wanton self-destruction?

"Finally, to repeat, the artist must find symbols important to man rather than mere patterns. Art, whether in architecture, painting or sculpture, can never be wholly a personal thing but must, if the artist is to have meaning for society, lead toward goals greater than the cellars of the dealers or of the museums—and into the larger patterns of culture.

"The cultural hopes of our time are identical with those of all time—that is, to give reason and dignity to human existence." \*

As I look at the architecture of

the ages, including our own, I am reminded of a poem by the Latin poet Lucien, wherein Hermes shows Menippus the skeletons of the beautiful women of antiquity—

"But, Hermes, I see nothing but skull and bones, show me Helen."

"This skull here, this is Helen."

"Hermes, was it for this that a thousand ships sailed, that countless men died, that cities were destroyed?"

Hermes answered—"Ah Menippus, you never saw the woman alive!"

And so in the charnel house of the modern city you, lost in a wasteland of the meager, your job is to know a living Helen: and this needs much more than just a wolf's whistle to a passing fancy.

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\* Observations given at first meeting of Visual Arts Section of International Conference of Arts and Letters—Ralph Walker

## News from the Educational Field

**S**UMMER SCHOOL of the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico will be a Design Workshop in Architecture and Planning and an opportunity to study the Spanish language and Mexican art and archeology. Further infor-

mation and catalog obtainable from Prof. Hugh L. McMath, School of Architecture, University of Texas, Austin 12, Texas.

CARNEGIE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY announces the appointment

of a new acting head for its Architectural Department, filling the place of John Knox Shear, who has been head of the Department since 1949 and who is now Editor of

the *Architectural Record*. The new acting head is Associate Professor Raymond A. Fisher, appointed to act in that capacity until a new permanent head is appointed.

Are registration statutes and building codes antithetical?

## The Architect and Conflicting Laws

IN THREE PARTS—PART III

By Frank Memoli

An address before the Cincinnati Chapter, A.I.A.,  
January 19, 1954.

**A**NOTHER UNFORESEEN RESULT of the building code which plagues architects nowadays is the competition it sometimes sets up between them and the building code enforcement officers. With some building codes, it is not necessary for a client who wants a good building to seek the services of an architect. An owner and his contractors have merely to seek architectural advice and counsel from the code official. This competition is brought about mainly by the overzealous writers of building codes—usually architects and engineers themselves—who try to set up a code which will protect the individual owner against substandard building practice, and also will protect the general public from the threat to their life, health and safety. That is, instead of

writing a minimum code they seek to write a standard code; instead of merely prohibiting practices which endanger the life, health and safety of the public, they write one which protects the interests of property buyers and owners. Thus, a political bureau sets itself up as an agent of property owners in direct competition with architects and engineers, and without the free choice or consent of the owner.

Since the client has full recourse to law if his contractor should fail to abide by the code, the contractor in self-defense makes full use of the code bureau, and the building code enforcement officers are bound, as public servants, and sometimes as architects and engineers, to give free architectural and engineering services to the public.

The point could be expanded

considerably in a discussion of the architect's legal rights and responsibilities. Suffice it to say, however, that many of the present-day code provisions do not seem to be of any public concern. If a home owner wishes to build plaster walls that crack, if he wishes a room only six feet high and without windows, if he wants to get to his second floor bedrooms by a ladder instead of steps, that would seem to be his business, so long as he does not endanger others by his acts. On the other hand, if a home owner or buyer wishes to avoid the many nuisances and dangers to himself, his family or his friends, which an ill-planned house may bring, he can go to an architect for advice on how to build. If a home buyer is poor and has little capital to invest in a home, he should have the liberty to assume some of the discomforts of small crowded quarters with few inconveniences, and the architect should have the right to get for such a client the best possible house he can afford, even if it means six-feetceilings, a ladder to the second-floor bedrooms, and a carport instead of a garage.



This does not advocate the elimination of steps in favor of ladders

between floors of a building merely because ladders are cheaper; on the contrary. If we were to leave such things to the architect, we would find that safety and beauty would be, for him, prime considerations above economy, and that he would raise his present standards in that respect far higher than set by the building codes. This would be especially true in public, institutional and industrial buildings where—even when the client is the government itself—the building program calls for standards which, to paraphrase a quote from several government sources, "should be no more than required by the legal, applicable building codes." As it is, the architect does little else today but referee a struggle between economy and legal requirements, where he is usually caught in the middle just like any ordinary contractor and builder.

What we would like to make clear here is that in the matter of building codes the law has gone beyond its social purposes in order to protect the individual from his own acts. Thus, it encroaches upon the rights and duties of the architectural profession, which exists for the very purpose of protecting the individual from wrong acts in matters of building and planning, *if*

*the individual so wants to be protected!* If we were to investigate statistics in the matter of home safety, I am sure that we would find the porcelain bathtub a greater menace to personal life and limb than the ladder or the spiral stair. Yet the efforts of many safety-minded people to have non-skid bathtubs manufactured and installed in the home have met with failure. It seems that personal safety is not always a selling factor. Housewives would rather take the risks involved with a smooth shining surface than have to contend with the ugliness of carborundum grits in a bathtub. The point is that the choice should be the housewife's in the matter of bathtubs as it should be the homeowner's in the matter of steps and stairs. Legislation which forbids a choice in such matters is paternalistic and entirely contrary to principles of American freedom and justice.



There may be some difference of opinion as to the degree in which social risk and individual risk are linked. Nevertheless, such differences can still be resolved on the basis of the principle which couples the general welfare with the greatest freedom to the individual—a

principle which has guided American jurisprudence up to now. We are not yet, it is hoped, wholly committed to paternalistic government. Yet, under our modern building codes, Henry David Thoreau could not possibly have built his hut near Walden Pond. Some may say rather impatiently, "Oh, he was just a tramp." But, such a statement only proves how much humanity and spiritual equanimity we have sacrificed for modern material comforts. The question arises then, "Has it been worth it?" For most of us, undoubtedly, it has been. The others have no choice in the matter. They cannot build as they can afford or choose to build—they must build as the code demands. The tragic injustice is that the codes are not always distinctly protective to the public alone. They also encroach upon the rights and freedom of the individual in order to protect him from the results of his own carelessness, which should be his own fault anyway, and also to protect him from his ignorance, the consequences of which should also fall upon his own head if he does not seek competent professional advice in matters about which he knows little or nothing.

In short, we have licensed or

registered practitioners to guide, advise, and act as the agents of an owner of a building or proposed building who will act in the best interests of the owner and for the general welfare. The architects have been examined according to the laws of the state for their qualifications to practise and for their integrity. They are expected, not only by the laws of the state governing their registration but also by their professional codes, not to jeopardize the public health and safety and to be fully aware of their social responsibilities in the practise of their profession. Why then must they submit also to following strictly the provisions of a building code set up as a standard of professional practice? Was it at all necessary for them to be registered as architects or receive a license to practise in order to protect the life, health, and safety of the public when the life, health, and safety are already sufficiently protected by the building code?

What we have then is a conflict of law which must be resolved, *but not by the degradation of the architect.*

This conflict of law, we see, is between the legal *positive* power and authority granted to the architect through his license or registra-

tion by the state, as opposed by a similar *negative* power and authority granted by the state or municipality to a bureau or building commissioner through the institution of a building code. Now then, an architect's right to settle issues relative to building is earned by his professional competence, and this right is granted to him by his state. This power and authority is patent in his license or registration. He is legally recognized as an architect and he is given the right to practise as such. And, the right to practise is the right to design, plan and build as the *architect* sees fit, and not merely as the building code allows. The building code was never, by its inception and continuation, intended to restrain the architect in the practise of his profession.



As architects, we should realize, and we should educate the public to understand, that our skill and ingenuity in planning and designing, our building knowledge, and our unimpeachable integrity in such matters as they relate to the public and private welfare, all of these are our *chief stock-in-trade*. When these are denied to us, as they are many times by the administrators

and enforcement officers of the building code, and when we can no longer assume the authority and responsibility that go with professional privilege and protection, then we are doomed as a profession. The architect will then have no more reason for being, and his professional duties may be better taken over by the lawyer, the draftsman, and the civil service clerk.

A building code, you see, requires that *all* must follow its provisions as interpreted by the building commissioner or the courts, once it has been passed into the law by action of the people's representatives. For the architect to defer to the judgment of the courts in professional matters which are his concern, is like royalty giving up all of its birthrights. The action is an inevitable result in the case of a royalty which neglects its social duties and no longer serves the people. But, architects are still of some social consequence. They still have some awareness of social obligations, responsibilities, and duties. Or, is there some question about this?

Does the architect really deserve to be flung from his position as a social leader to become a groveling parasite, permitted to exist,

but unwanted and unnecessary in a world where architecture as an art, an adventure, and a social force is condemned by law?

A discussion following the reading of this paper brought out some practical points leading to the question, "Can something be done about the serious encroachments of building codes upon architectural practice?"



What we have said would seem to advocate the overthrow of all building codes and the policing of the public welfare in matters of building and planning by competent professionals. In principle, that is exactly what is indicated. In practice, however, we shall encounter some obstacles. Today there are many areas of building construction and planning where architects do not enter, mainly due to the ignorance of the public regarding architectural services. These areas must be protected by building codes. However, architects cannot brook the extension of building codes to cover areas which are proper to architectural practice. Rather, the trend should be the other way around. Architects

must slowly and surely overtake and cover those areas now policed by building codes. This can be done through the extension, reinforcement and enforcement of the licensing and registration laws, coupled with the constant downward revision of the building codes as their provisions become outmoded or unnecessary. The practical process may be long, drawn-

out, tedious and difficult, but it can be done.

The purpose of this paper is not, therefore, to incite a professional revolt against building codes, but rather to create a professional attitude among architects which shall, by earning public esteem and confidence, eventually bring about the superfluousness of building codes.



## Architects Read and Write

*Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative*



### THE MATTER OF ETHICS

By C. GODFREY POGGI, Elizabeth, N. J.

THIS MATTER of professional ethics is indeed a grievous problem, particularly as human nature is so fundamentally perverse. We architects have a very good code, and if lived up to by all of us, our practice would be a truly delightful occupation. Advertising, even the non-laudatory type has been definitely banned. This has created a system of ambulance chasing, as when a new job is in the air; the owner is now hounded by a rabble of architects in order to make themselves known. Can this be called ethical?

Then again the real-estate dealers have invaded our domain

and now not only deal in property, but also in architects. One person building a home told this writer that although she had obtained plans and specifications, her dealings were entirely through the real-estate man and she had never met the architect.

We who practise in the suburbs are often interfered with by the large metropolitan architectural firms, who appear to disregard ethics when outside of the large cities. Many a good suburban architect with whom definite steps toward employment have been taken has suddenly lost the job because of the proselytizing of some

firm located in a large city. If this is ethical, that definition of the term does not agree with the dictionary definition.

It is bad enough to have our own code violated by our fellows, but when no code is in evidence the situation is even worse. It seems to this writer that there should also be a code established between the architects and builders, also possibly with the real-estate dealers. For one thing, with regard to the

builders, it might overcome the situation where plans returned by the bidders would not be returned in a mutilated condition, plus an improvement in most of the dealings between the architects and builders, likewise the real-estate men.

These are thoughts, here presented, for what they may be worth, and it is also here suggested that The A.I.A. give due consideration thereto.

## SECURITY

"THE NEW YORK STATE ASSN. OF ARCHITECTS, affiliated with The American Institute of Architects, voted at its recent Lake Placid convention to require members to swear loyalty to the federal and state constitutions.

Some 400 delegates attended the session and readily approved the new requisite for membership."

From *The Dodge Reporter*, November 1954

December 3, 1954  
The Security Committee  
The American Institute of  
Architects  
The Octagon  
Washington, D. C.  
Gentlemen:

At a recent meeting of our chapter it was decided that all members should swear loyalty to our constitution. The vote would have been unanimous had not one of our members, John Mergatroid Row, abstained. Our president immediately appointed a committee of three to investigate John's loyalty, and I had the sad duty of being one of

those drafted. Josiah C. Macartney was made chairman, and the third member was Martin L. Dice.

We started our investigation by calling on John at his office in order to obtain from him a list of his work. We could not help noticing, with considerable dismay, that John's library included such books as Le Corbusier's complete works, which contains, as you know, several buildings built or proposed for Communist Russia, as well as books on the work of Oscar Niemeyer and El Lissitsky. We were even more disturbed to find that the first name on the list John

furnished us was that of the bear house at our local zoo.

At the next meeting of our committee we drove out to the zoo, with the express purpose of investigating the bear house. It is my sad duty to report that this house is in the form of a star, the house itself forming the figure at the center, while the outside runs for the bears form the points. And more disturbing still, the material chosen was red brick! Imagine our dismay when the full import of this design struck us! Imagine a group of innocent children flying over this building, and perhaps with childish curiosity asking the stewardess what it was. There is no question but that she would be forced, in all honesty, to state that this was a house for bears in the form of a red star. Imagine further the harm which this bold piece of Soviet propaganda would do to their tender minds. This, and many other possibilities flashed through our minds as we examined the building.

One further detail engaged our attention. In the superintendent's closet, conspicuously displayed, was a conventional tool board, with the shapes of the tools outlined in

Chinese Red. Prominent in this display were a hammer and a sickle. True, the tools were missing. Nevertheless it seems likely that the dread impact of the building may already have influenced the superintendent's mind. This final detail forced us to the unwilling conclusion that somehow, somewhere, something must have gone wrong with John.

As secretary, I have been instructed by the committee, and by our president, whom we have kept informed of the course of our investigation, to write you, stating these facts. We feel that we should proceed cautiously, with our feet on the ground. Nevertheless, in spite of our personal devotion to John, we feel that the facts, as I have stated them, are too disturbing to ignore. We are, therefore, reluctantly forced to the conclusion that this is a matter for the National Committee on Security, and so recommend it to your attention, in order that it may receive a full, impartial, and judicial review.

Yours truly,  
Merton Catfish\*

---

\* A protegé of Robert Woods Kennedy,  
Cambridge, Mass.



MARCH, 1955

## The Editors' Asides

A NEWS CORRESPONDENT in *The Scotsman* reveals as much of himself as he does of architectural happenings when he writes: "As the building will be largely out of the public gaze the architect, Mr. Esme Gordon, has been free to design in the contemporary manner."

HAROLD SLEEPER, who led the 1954 Trek to South America, was impressed by, among other things, the practice of Panamanian architects. One thing they do, in contrast to our own practice, is to arrange for the making of lawns, walks and roads long before the house is finished. The planting also is carried along with the construction of the building, so that when the building is finished the site is all planted.

WE DID NOT REALIZE that as pipe smokers we are rated almost as a public nuisance, and by no less an authority than Harvard University. Industrial Hygiene Professor Yaglou, in experiments looking to a determination of the ventilation requirements for removing tobacco smoke from a room, found a sad state of affairs. "When less than 15 cu. ft. per minute, per

smoker, of fresh air is introduced into the room, occupants complained of eye sting, headache, coughing and nose irritation." That word "occupants" offers a possible alibi: Were the observing occupants specially chosen from the narrowing field of non-smokers? Did they have any other pronounced allergies? Nothing is said about the origin of the tobacco smoke—cigars, cigarettes or pipes? Until further evidence is produced, we are going to hold the belief that all the ills of the smoke-filled room are chargeable to cigarettes and cigars, never to the fragrant odor of a clean briar.

RECENT STUDIES by firms in the building material field have delved into complex statistics in attempts to find out just how much the dwelling owner included in his contract with the builder and how much of the work he reserved to do himself. It seems that two-thirds of the homemakers attempt at least some of the do-it-yourself activities. It also seems that the final job is plastered with good intentions—the owner starts a lot of tasks, but thinks better of it and lets the builder finish them.

THE FEW ARCHITECTS who look back to the nineteenth century, when practically all one had to specify in paint was "lead and oil," may be interested to know that development of improved coatings has paralleled the introduction of plastics raw materials until, in 1953, a quarter of the total synthetic resin production found its way into surface coatings.

SUGGESTIONS CONTINUE to come in telling how traffic conditions can be ameliorated. William R. Sullivan of Los Angeles, where he has great opportunity for observing traffic, says: "Until a solution is found for the traffic congestion problem, let us keep some of the cars off the streets by having a stricter driving-license code."

The late Will Rogers, you remember, offered another remedy: Keep off the road all cars not paid for, and the problems will all be solved.

JIMMIE GAMBARO's keen eyes noted our remarks in the December Asides on the oldest structural elements still in use in New York City—columns from Pompeii, and adds:

"Through these white marble portals of antiquity passed the

early members on their way to attend the first annual banquet of The American Institute of Architects, February 22, 1858. This is another story which I hope to send on to you soon together with a photograph of the original Delmonico building showing these columns. When the original building was demolished, about 1890, the white marble columns were removed and reset in the present building on the same site. They are installed under a brownstone portico and embellish the main entrance to a restaurant called "Oscar's."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, patriot and citizen extraordinary, has to his credit many unique achievements, among which it should not be forgotten that he brought the first bathtub to these shores from France. Of hammered copper, it was slipper-shaped, the bather sitting in the heel and extending his feet into the toe.

ASTRAGAL, in the London *Architects' Journal*, searching the world for greener pastures, notes that down in Rio the architects drive to work in Cadillacs and collect Renoirs for a hobby. He ought to see our bricklayers!



Stone Mountain Elementary School,  
Stone Mountain, Georgia

\*Architects: A. Thomas Bradbury, Atlanta  
Ralph E. Slay, Associate

## Cinderella '55

Would that, at nine o'clock tomorrow morning, our thirty-five million schoolchildren all over America could take their seats in schools like this. But they have no fairy godmother, no magic wand. Only the hand of man, faced by its greatest obstacle — time.

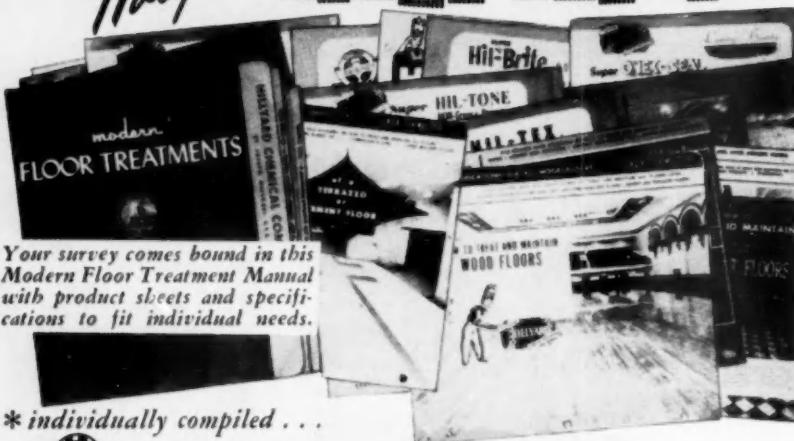
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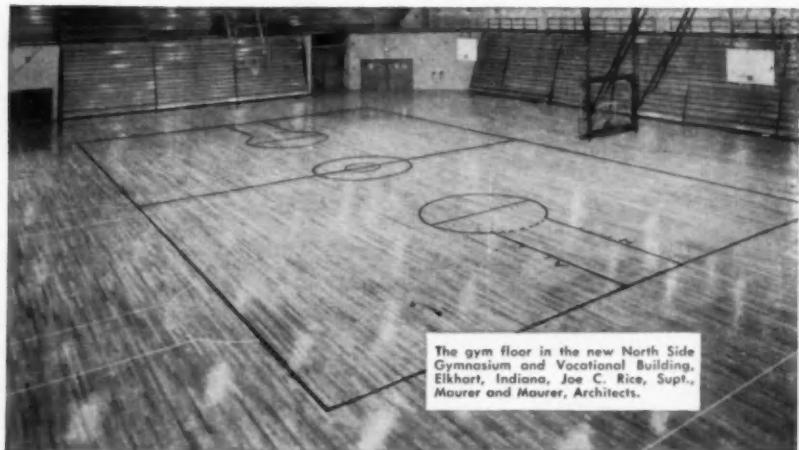
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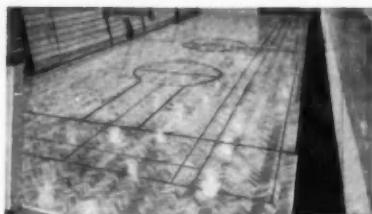
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The gym floor in the new North Side Gymnasium and Vocational Building, Elkhart, Indiana, Joe C. Rice, Supt., Maurer and Maurer, Architects.

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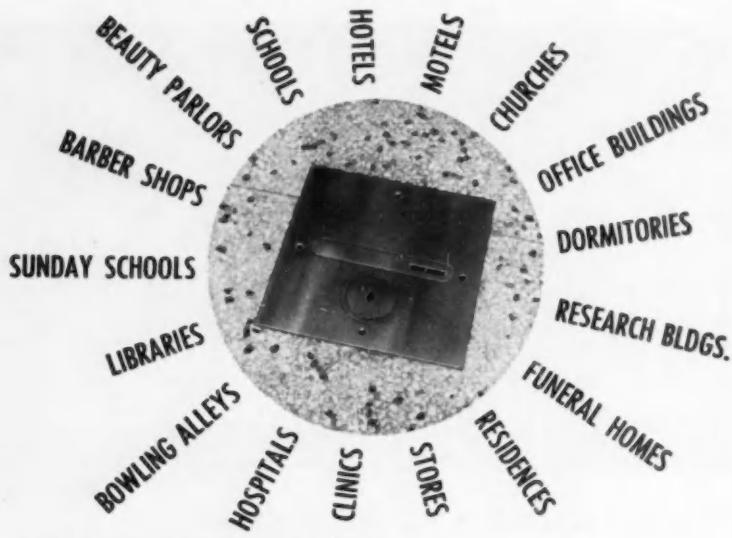
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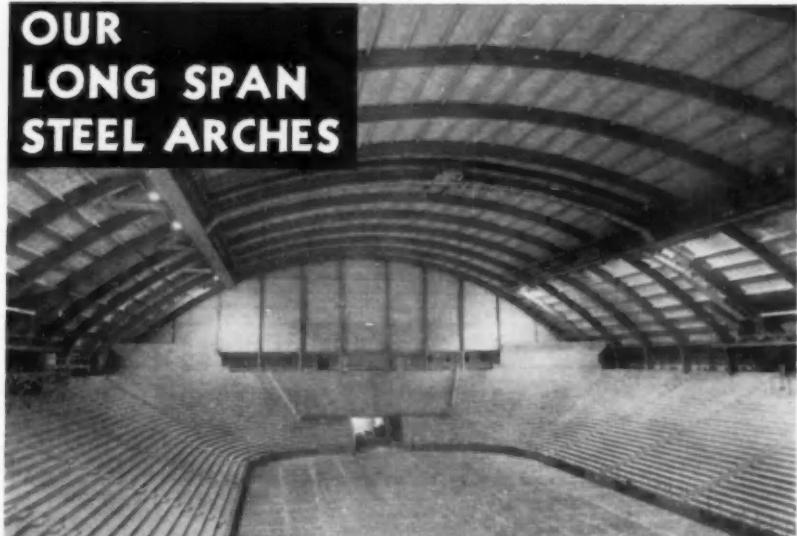


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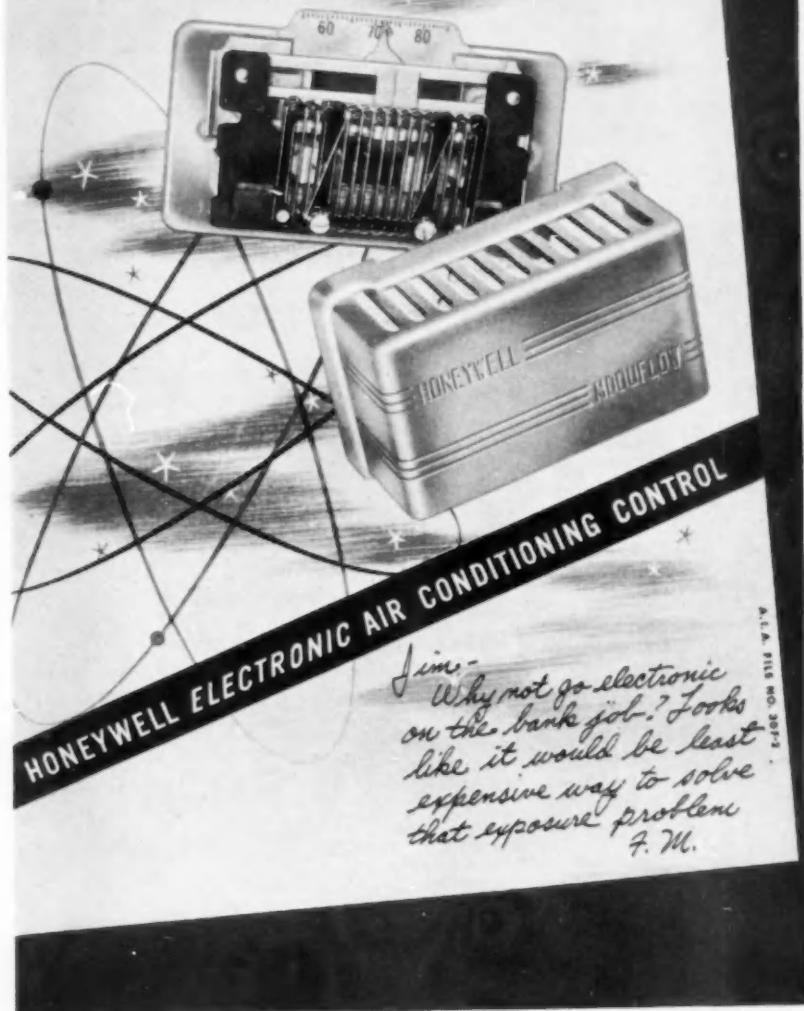
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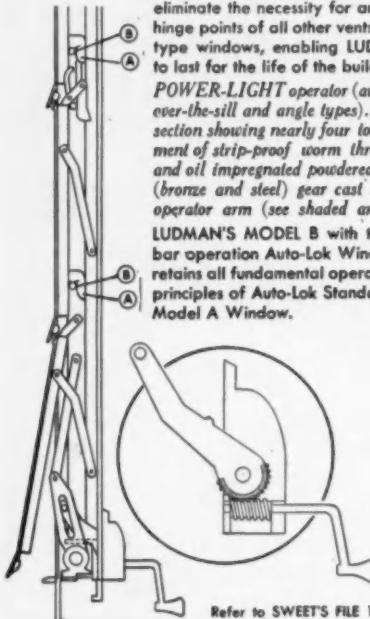


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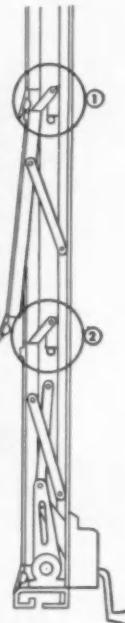
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